

Philosophical and Theological Foundations as the Foundation for the Development of Islamic Religious Education

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ABSTRACT

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) has a strategic role in shaping the personality of students as a whole through the development of intellectual, spiritual, moral, and social dimensions. In the midst of complex globalization and modernization challenges, PAI is required to function not only as a means of religious knowledge transfer, but also as a contextual, reflective, and character-building educational process. This research aims to analyze the philosophical and theological foundations as the foundation for the development of Islamic Religious Education and its implications for educational praxis. The research uses a qualitative approach with the library research method through the analysis of various scientific literature, books, and works of Islamic education thinkers. The results of the study show that the philosophical foundation plays a role in strengthening the rationality, relevance, and contextuality of PAI, while the theological foundation which includes monotheism, worship, morals, and the caliph provides normative and spiritual direction for education. The integration of the two foundations results in a holistic PAI model that is holistic, balanced, and adaptive to the dynamics of modern life. This research emphasizes that strengthening and integrating philosophical and theological foundations is the key to the development of sustainable and meaningful Islamic Religious Education.

1. INTRODUCTION

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Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is one of the fundamental components in the education system that aims to form the personality of students as a whole, both from intellectual, spiritual, and moral aspects (Alda et al., 2025; Arqam et al., 2026; Hartina et al., 2025; Natasya et al., 2025; Rohani et al., 2025; Susono et al., 2025). Through PAI, students are directed not only to know the teachings of Islam cognitively, but also to be able to live the values of faith and practice them in personal, social, and community life. Thus, PAI has a strategic function in shaping human beings who have faith, noble character, and are able to carry out their role as servants of Allah and caliphs on earth (Aladdiin & Ps, 2019; Ismail, Ramadhan, et al., 2025; Nurdiyanto et al., 2024; H. S. Sari et al., 2021). In the context of the rapid development of globalization and modernization, the challenges faced by Islamic Religious Education are becoming increasingly complex. The advancement of science and technology, the unstoppable flow of information, and social and cultural changes have a significant impact on students' mindsets, attitudes, and behaviors (Arifin, 2025; Fahmiyudin et al., 2025; Johan et al., 2024; Syirva & Kawijaya, 2025; Zain et al., 2025). On the one hand, these developments open up opportunities for the advancement of education, but on the other hand it also raises various moral problems, value crises, and character degradation (Karadona & Sari, 2025; Rahma et al., 2024). This condition requires PAI not only to function as a means of religious knowledge transfer, but also as an educational process that is able to build intellectual, spiritual, and

moral awareness in a balanced and contextual manner with the reality of modern life. The development of Islamic Religious Education that is responsive to the challenges of the times requires a strong and directed conceptual foundation. Without a clear foundation, PAI has the potential to lose its direction and get stuck in learning practices that are normative, textual, and less relevant to the needs of students. Therefore, a theoretical foothold is needed that is able to provide direction, goals, and a framework for the development of PAI in a systematic manner. The foundation is mainly derived from the philosophical and theological understanding that is the main basis in Islamic education.

The philosophical foundation has an important role in the development of PAI because it functions as a rational frame of thinking that explains the nature of human beings, educational goals, and the ideal learning process (Bhima, 2024a; Faizi et al., 2023; Munawarah, Ismail, et al., 2025; Natasya et al., 2025; Puja et al., 2025; Riyadi et al., 2025; Susono et al., 2025). In the perspective of Islamic philosophy of education, human beings are seen as intelligent beings endowed with intellectual, emotional, and social potentials that must be developed in harmony (Arqam et al., 2025; Ismail, Ammar, et al., 2025; Ismail, Ramadhan, et al., 2025; Karadona et al., 2022; Munawarah, Jannah, et al., 2025). Education does not solely aim to instill knowledge, but also to shape students' way of thinking, critical attitude, and reflective ability (Rahma et al., 2024; Rahmawati et al., 2025). The philosophical approach in PAI encourages the use of reason and reason in understanding Islamic teachings, so that students not only accept the teachings dogmatically, but are able to relate Islamic values to the reality of life and the social challenges they face (Bayu et al., 2024; Hawari et al., 2024; Tirtana & Rahmayani, 2025).

In addition to the philosophical foundation, Islamic Religious Education also relies on a theological foundation that provides normative and transcendental direction. The theological foundation is derived from the Qur'an, Sunnah, and the principles of the Islamic faith which affirm that the main goal of education is to form human beings who have faith, piety, and noble character. The theological dimension ensures that the entire educational process remains within the corridor of divine values and is inseparable from the orientation of devotion to Allah SWT. Thus, PAI is not only oriented to academic achievement and intellectual prowess, but also to the formation of religious awareness, moral responsibility, and ethics in social life (Marlina & Nugraha, 2025a; Maryati et al., 2025). The integration between philosophical and theological foundations is the main foundation in the development of a complete, balanced, and comprehensive Islamic Religious Education. The two foundations are complementary and inseparable. The philosophical approach plays a role in strengthening the rationality, relevance, and contextuality of learning, while the theological approach maintains the purity of the values, goals, and spiritual orientation of Islamic education (Suryani et al., 2025). Without balanced integration, PAI has the potential to become a normative education without critical understanding, or on the contrary become rational but lose the foundation of divine values.

Therefore, the study of philosophical and theological foundations as the foundation for the development of Islamic Religious Education is very important and relevant. This study is expected to be able to make a conceptual contribution in strengthening the direction, substance, and praxis of PAI, so that Islamic education can function optimally in forming a generation of Muslims who have faith, knowledge, noble character, and are able to face the dynamics and challenges of modern life without losing their Islamic identity.

2. METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with the library research method. The qualitative approach was chosen because this research focuses on understanding, interpretation, and in-depth analysis of the concepts, ideas, and thoughts of experts related to the philosophical and theological foundations in Islamic Religious Education. This research does not aim to test hypotheses or measure data quantitatively, but to explore the meaning, value, and conceptual framework that is the basis for the development of Islamic Religious Education (Bunkar et al., 2024; Faelasup & Astuti, 2025; Putri et al., 2023).

Research data sources are obtained from various relevant literature, including scientific books, national and international academic journals, research articles, as well as works of educational thinkers and Islamic figures who discuss the philosophy of Islamic education, Islamic theology, and the development of Islamic Religious Education. In addition, supporting data sources in the form of education policy documents and other academic publications are also used to enrich perspectives and strengthen studies. Data collection is carried out through systematic literature search, critical reading, and recording and organizing data based on predetermined themes (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Hadi & Afandi, 2021; Pilarska, 2021).

The data analysis in this study uses descriptive-analytical techniques. The data that has been collected is presented systematically to describe relevant concepts and views, then analyzed by examining the relationship between ideas, comparing the views of experts, and drawing theoretical implications of the integration of philosophical and theological foundations on the development of Islamic Religious Education. To maintain the validity of the data, this study applies source triangulation by comparing various literature from different thought backgrounds, so as to obtain a comprehensive and objective understanding.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Philosophical Foundations in Islamic Religious Education

The philosophical foundation in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) functions as a conceptual framework that explains the essence, purpose, and direction of the implementation of religious education in a rational and reflective manner. The results of the study show that the philosophy of Islamic education provides a deep understanding of human nature, knowledge, and values, so that PAI is not understood solely as a process of transmitting religious doctrines, but as a conscious and planned effort to develop all human potentials as a whole. In this perspective, PAI plays a role in shaping people who have faith, reason, and morals through a dialogical and critical approach (Marvianasari et al., 2024). Ontologically, Islamic philosophy of education views humans as creatures that have physical, intellect, and spiritual dimensions. These findings confirm that religious education must touch all these dimensions in a balanced manner. It is not enough to only emphasize ritual and cognitive aspects, but must be able to form the moral, spiritual, and social awareness of students. By understanding the essence of human beings holistically, PAI has a clear orientation in forming a complete and responsible person in the life of this world and the hereafter (Irawan & Rohman, 2025; Mizani, 2025).

From the epistemological side, the results of the study show that the philosophical foundation of PAI emphasizes the integration of reason, empirical experience, and revelation as a source of knowledge. Reason has an important role in understanding, interpreting, and contextualizing Islamic teachings in the reality of life. Therefore, religious education not only emphasizes the memorization of religious texts, but encourages the process of critical, reflective, and analytical thinking. This

approach makes PAI relevant to the development of science and the challenges of modern life (Anggraina, 2025; Celine & Zaini, 2024). Meanwhile, axiologically, the philosophical foundation of PAI is oriented towards universal Islamic values, such as justice, honesty, responsibility, and humanity. These values are the basis for the formulation of educational goals and the development of learning methods. The results of the study show that PAI, which is based on philosophy, is able to internalize these values rationally and applicatively, so that students not only know the teachings of Islam, but are also able to apply them in real life. Thus, the philosophical foundation provides direction that PAI must combine rationality and Islamic values in order to be able to form human beings who think critically, have noble character, and are adaptive to the changing times. Religious education based on philosophy is not dogmatic, but contextual and solutive to the problems of life (Afifuddin & Ishak, 2022; Marlina & Nugraha, 2025b; Siswanto, 2023).

3.2. The Basis of Tauhid in Islamic Religious Education

Tawheed is the core of Islamic teachings and is the main foundation in Islamic Religious Education. Theologically, monotheism affirms the oneness of Allah SWT as the only God who must be worshipped, obeyed, and made the center of orientation of human life. The results of the study show that Islamic Religious Education must be directed to instill monotheistic awareness from an early age, so that students have a view of life based on faith in Allah SWT. Tawhid education not only functions to form beliefs, but also builds awareness that all aspects of life are under the supervision and will of God (Damanik et al., 2025; Dina et al., 2025; Fitriana et al., 2024). In the context of education, the foundation of monotheism serves as the basis for the formation of students' mindset and life attitudes. Students who have a strong understanding of monotheism will view knowledge, learning activities, and social life as part of worship to Allah Swt. Therefore, PAI must be able to integrate the value of monotheism into all learning materials, so that students do not separate religious knowledge and the reality of life. Thus, monotheism becomes the spirit of education that animates the entire learning process.

In addition, monotheistic education functions as a strengthening of students' identity and spiritual resilience in the midst of the challenges of modernity. A solid understanding of monotheism helps students to have a clear life orientation, not easily influenced by values that are contrary to Islamic teachings, and be able to make decisions based on faith values. With this foundation, PAI plays a strategic role in shaping Muslim personalities who are faithful, knowledgeable, and principled. The foundation of worship is a practical manifestation of monotheism in daily life. Theologically, worship includes all human activities that are carried out with the intention of Allah SWT and in accordance with the guidance of the Shari'a. The results of the study show that Islamic Religious Education not only aims to teach formal worship procedures, but also instill spiritual awareness about the meaning, wisdom, and value behind each form of worship. Thus, worship is understood not just as a ritual routine, but as a means of personality formation and self-control.

In educational practice, the foundation of worship requires PAI to foster the habit of worship consistently and consciously. Worship learning is directed so that students understand the relationship between worship and the formation of morals, discipline, and personal responsibility. For example, prayer is not only taught from the aspect of movement and reading, but is also instilled as a means of fostering time discipline, peace of mind, and behavior control. With this approach, worship education becomes an effective means in forming the religious character of students.

Furthermore, worship education in PAI serves as a strengthening of awareness of the vertical relationship between humans and Allah SWT. This awareness encourages students to always present spiritual values in every learning activity and social life. Thus, PAI not only produces students who

understand the theory of worship, but also forms individuals who practice the value of worship in real life on a continuous basis.

The foundation of morality is a theological dimension that is directly related to the formation of character and behavior of students. Morality in Islam is derived from the teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah, and imitates the morals of the Prophet PBUH as *uswah hasanah*. The results of the study show that Islamic Religious Education has a central role in instilling noble moral values, such as honesty, trust, justice, patience, and social responsibility. Moral education is not only normative, but must be manifested in real attitudes and behaviors. In the context of education, the foundation of morality requires PAI to integrate moral development into the entire learning process. Students are not only taught about the concepts of good and bad, but also guided to internalize these values through example, habituation, and reflection. The results of the study show that teachers' role models have a very important role in the success of moral education, because moral values are more effectively instilled through real examples than just verbal advice. In addition, moral education in PAI functions as a moral controller in the lives of students. With a strong moral foundation, students are expected to be able to face social and moral challenges in the modern era, such as promiscuity, misuse of technology, and ethical crises. Theologically-based moral education makes students have a moral awareness born of faith, not just social pressure or formal rules.

The foundation of the caliph affirms the role of humans as representatives of Allah SWT on earth who are in charge of managing, maintaining, and prospering life in accordance with the principles of justice and benefit. The results of the study show that the concept of the caliph provides a strong social and ecological dimension in Islamic Religious Education. Education is not only directed to form individual piety, but also social piety, which is reflected in concern for society and the environment. In educational practice, the foundation of the caliphate encourages PAI to instill the values of social responsibility, leadership, and concern for the environment. Students are directed to understand that their knowledge and abilities are a mandate that must be used for the common good. Religious education with the foundation of the caliph forms students who are active, productive, and have social sensitivity, not passive and exclusive individuals (Amelia et al., 2025; Syauqi et al., 2025; Wibowo et al., 2025). Furthermore, education based on the concept of the caliph requires PAI to equip students with the ability to think critically and ethically in dealing with the problems of modern life. Students are encouraged to analyze social, economic, and environmental issues from the perspective of Islamic values. Thus, PAI plays a role in forming a generation of Muslims who are not only obedient in worship, but also able to contribute significantly to the development of society and civilization.

Based on the results of the literature review analyzed through *the library research approach*, it can be concluded that the theological foundation of Islamic Religious Education which includes aspects of monotheism, worship, morals, and caliph is an interrelated foundation and forms a complete theological framework. The findings in this study were obtained from a systematic review of various sources of literature, such as classical and contemporary books, scientific journals, and the works of Islamic education thinkers. The *library research approach* allows researchers to delve deeply into the theological views of experts and formulate a conceptual synthesis of the role of theological foundations in the development of Islamic Religious Education. Using the literature review method, this study emphasizes that strengthening the theological foundation is not only a normative need, but also a conceptual need in facing the challenges of modern education. The results of the literature analysis show that Islamic Religious Education which is built on a strong theological foundation is able to integrate spiritual, moral, intellectual, and social dimensions in a balanced manner. Therefore, *the library research approach* is a relevant and appropriate method in studying

and strengthening the understanding of the theological foundation as the foundation for the development of comprehensive and sustainable Islamic Religious Education.

3.3. Integration of Philosophical and Theological Foundations in the Praxis of Islamic Religious Education

The results of the study show that the effective and sustainable development of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) requires a complete integration between the philosophical and theological foundations. The philosophical foundation provides a rational framework for understanding human nature, educational goals, and the ideal learning process, while the theological foundation provides normative direction and transcendental values that come from revelation. The integration of these two foundations creates a balance between rationality and spirituality, between the use of reason and adherence to divine values. Without balanced integration, PAI has the potential to experience a reduction in meaning, both to become a dogmatic education and an education that loses its spiritual orientation (Arini & Umami, 2019; Maryati et al., 2025). In the practice of learning, the integration of philosophical and theological foundations is reflected in a pedagogical approach that encourages students to understand Islamic teachings critically, reflectively, and meaningfully, without detaching them from the foundations of faith and piety. PAI teachers not only play a role in conveying sharia laws and religious doctrines, but also facilitate the thinking process of students to understand the wisdom, purpose, and moral values behind these teachings. Through a dialogical and reflective approach, students are trained to relate Islamic teachings to the reality of modern life, so as to grow rational, contextual, and responsible religious awareness.

This integration is also seen in the development of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum which combines mastery of religious materials with the development of critical, analytical, and ethical thinking skills. An integrated curriculum not only emphasizes the memorization of religious concepts or texts, but also encourages a deep understanding and application of Islamic values in daily life. Through this kind of curriculum, students are guided to understand their identity in their entirety as servants of Allah ('abd) who are obedient in worship as well as caliphs on earth who are responsible for social life and the environment. Furthermore, the integration of philosophical and theological foundations has direct implications for the role of teachers in the educational process. PAI teachers are required not only to have academic and pedagogic competence, but also high moral and spiritual integrity. Teachers play the role of intellectual facilitators who develop students' thinking skills, as well as moral role models (*uswah hasanah*) that represent Islamic values in daily life. Thus, philosophical and theological values are not only taught theoretically, but are embodied in real practice that can be exemplified by students.

The integration of the two foundations also affects the evaluation approach in Islamic Religious Education. Assessments are not only focused on cognitive aspects, such as material mastery or memorization, but also include affective and psychomotor aspects, such as students' religious attitudes, morals, and reflective abilities. Holistic evaluation allows educators to assess the extent to which philosophical and theological values have been internalized in students, both in understanding and in real behavior. Overall, the integration of philosophical and theological foundations gives birth to a model of Islamic Religious Education that is holistic, balanced, and relevant to the dynamics of modern life. Islamic education not only produces students who are ritually obedient, but also has intellectual intelligence, moral maturity, and social concern. This integrated PAI model is able to form Muslim individuals who are faithful, knowledgeable, noble in character, and ready to face the challenges of the times without losing their Islamic identity.

Based on the results of literature analysis conducted through *the library research approach*, the integration of philosophical and theological foundations in the praxis of Islamic Religious

Education is understood as the result of the synthesis of the thoughts of education experts and Islamic thinkers from various library sources. The literature review approach allows researchers to examine philosophical and theological concepts in depth, compare various views, and formulate integrative patterns that are relevant to the development of PAI. Thus, *library research* is an effective method in uncovering and strengthening conceptual understanding of the importance of integrating the two foundations as the foundation for the development of comprehensive and contextual Islamic Religious Education.

3.4. Implications for the Development of Islamic Religious Education

The integration of philosophical and theological foundations has very significant implications for the development of Islamic Religious Education, both at the conceptual, structural, and practical levels. Conceptually, this integration enriches the paradigm of Islamic Religious Education with a more comprehensive, critical, and contextual approach. Religious education is no longer understood solely as a process of transmitting religious knowledge or memorizing normative texts, but as a process of forming a whole human being that includes the dimensions of faith, reason, morality, and social responsibility. This paradigm emphasizes that Islamic Religious Education must be able to answer the spiritual and intellectual needs of students in the midst of the dynamics of modern society (Karadona, 2025; Kurniawan et al., 2025; R. W. Sari et al., 2025).

From a curriculum perspective, the integration of philosophical and theological foundations encourages the development of Islamic Religious Education materials that are not only normative and doctrinal, but also reflective, analytical, and applicative. Teaching materials are designed to help students understand the meaning and purpose of Islamic teachings, as well as their relevance in real life. The PAI curriculum becomes more adaptive to the development of science, technology, and social issues, without losing the foothold of the values of revelation as the main source. Thus, the curriculum functions as a means of internalizing living and dynamic Islamic values. Pedagogically, this integration has implications for the development of learning methods and strategies that are more dialogical, participatory, and innovative. The PAI learning process is no longer dominated by a one-way approach, but prioritizes discussion, reflection, case studies, and contextual problem-solving. This approach allows students to develop critical thinking skills while deepening their religious awareness. Teachers play the role of facilitators who guide the process of searching for meaning, not just conveying religious information.

Another implication seems to be the strengthening of the role of educators as a central figure in the development of Islamic Religious Education. PAI teachers are required to have a deep philosophical understanding and strong theological commitment, so as to be able to integrate Islamic values in every aspect of learning. The example of teachers in attitudes, behaviors, and ways of thinking is an important factor in the success of internalizing religious values. Thus, the professionalism of teachers is not only measured by pedagogic and academic competence, but also by the moral and spiritual integrity they possess (Azis et al., 2025; Ismail, Ar-Rahman, et al., 2025; Judrah et al., 2024; Lestari et al., 2025). The integration of philosophical and theological foundations also has direct implications for the formation of students' character. Integrated Islamic education is able to form a balanced personality between intellectual intelligence and spiritual maturity. Students not only understand the teachings of Islam conceptually, but also have ethical awareness and social responsibility in implementing these values. The religious character that is formed is not formalistic, but grows as an internal consciousness that influences attitudes and behaviors in daily life.

In addition, the implications of this integration can also be seen in the evaluation system of Islamic Religious Education. The assessment is not only oriented towards cognitive achievement, but includes affective and psychomotor aspects, such as religious attitudes, honesty, social concern,

and consistency in behaving according to Islamic values. Holistic evaluation provides a more complete picture of the success of the educational process, while encouraging students to develop themselves in a sustainable manner. Thus, these results and discussions confirm that philosophical and theological foundations are the main foundations in the development of Islamic Religious Education that is oriented towards quality and relevance. The integration of the two is the key to building a superior, adaptive, and deeply rooted Islamic education system. Islamic religious education developed through this integration is expected to be able to produce a generation that is faithful, knowledgeable, noble in character, and has high social concerns.

Based on the study conducted through *the library research* approach, these implications are formulated from the results of a critical review of various literature sources that discuss the philosophy of Islamic education, Islamic theology, and the practice of Islamic Religious Education. Literature analysis allows researchers to identify relevant patterns of thinking, concepts, and theoretical findings, and synthesize them into an implicit framework for the development of PAI. Thus, *the library research* approach not only functions as a data collection method, but also as an analytical foundation in formulating systematic conceptual and practical implications for the development of Islamic Religious Education.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the literature review that has been conducted, it can be concluded that Islamic Religious Education has a fundamental role in shaping people who have faith, knowledge, and noble character. In the midst of the dynamics of globalization and modernization, PAI cannot be understood narrowly as normative and ritualistic learning, but must be developed as an educational process that touches all dimensions of students' humanity. Therefore, the existence of a philosophical and theological foundation is very crucial in determining the direction, purpose, and substance of Islamic Religious Education. The philosophical foundation provides a rational and reflective framework in understanding human nature, knowledge, and values, so that PAI is able to develop the intellectual, moral, and social potential of students in a balanced manner. The philosophical approach encourages PAI to be dialogical, critical, and contextual, as well as relevant to the development of science and the challenges of modern life. Meanwhile, the theological foundation that includes monotheism, worship, morals, and the concept of the caliph provides a normative and transcendental foothold that ensures that the entire educational process remains oriented towards divine values and the formation of religious consciousness. The integration between philosophical and theological foundations has proven to be the main foundation in the holistic and sustainable development of Islamic Religious Education. This integration allows for a balance between rationality and spirituality, between the development of reason and the formation of faith, and between individual piety and social responsibility. In educational praxis, the integration has implications for the development of curriculum, learning methods, the role of teachers, and a more comprehensive and meaningful evaluation system. Thus, this study emphasizes that strengthening and integrating philosophical and theological foundations is not only a conceptual need, but also a practical necessity in answering the challenges of Islamic Religious Education in the modern era. Islamic religious education, which is built on this foundation, is expected to be able to produce a generation of Muslims who have intellectual intelligence, spiritual maturity, noble morals, and high social concern, without losing their Islamic identity.

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